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ABSTRACT

The Boarding Home Program was developed by the Alaska State Department of Education, Division of State-Operated Schools, to provide students living in an unincorporated area of rural Alaska, where no public high school is available, with an opportunity to continue their education. Established as an interim measure until more regional high school boarding facilities are constructed, the program utilizes families who provide boarding homes for participating students. Presented in this guide for "boarding home parents" are the standards for participation, along with discussions of financial arrangements, student health services, student employment, and the role of the boarding parents (with examples of what the "foster" parents might be expected to do for the student). Also, the role of the home-school coordinator is explained, and his responsibilities to the student and boarding family are listed. A boarding home parent application is appended. (LS)

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PARENTS' GUIDE to the BOARDING HOME PROGRAM

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Cliff R. Hartman, Commissioner

Division of Regional Schools
James Harper, Director

February, 1970

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AN OPEN LETTER TO PROSPECTIVE BOARDING PARENTS:

The Boarding Home Program was developed by the State Department of Education, Division of State-Operated Schools, to provide an opportunity for students living in an unincorporated area of rural Alaska where no public high schools are available to continue their education. Basically, the State investigates and approves families and their facilities in communities having high schools and pays them a stipend for accepting students into their homes for the school year.

Although the Program was established as an interim measure until more regional high school boarding facilities are constructed, it appears that it will be an integral part of the State's educational plans for the next few years.

One of the major reasons the Program has been successful is the availability of good homes and families in most communities. We have been extremely pleased with those families who have offered their homes to our students. They have contributed a great deal more to these young adults than most of them realize.

We appreciate your interest and hope that after studying the following pages, you will consider participating as a boarding parent.

James M. Harper
Director, Regional Schools
and Boarding Home Program

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The Program is administered at the State level by the Division of Regional Schools and Boarding Home Program through the office of the Director in Juneau. It is his responsibility to admit students to the Program and make the community assignments. He is also responsible for the fiscal administration and policy development.

At the local level a Home-School Coordinator is employed to aid students, boarding parents, and the school with any problems that may arise. A description of his duties appears later in this handbook.

THE STUDENTS

The students who participate in the Boarding Home Program will vary greatly in their level of adult behavior and the degree of independence they have achieved. Generally, those villages which have no high schools are quite small as well as remote. However, some students from these villages have traveled extensively and lived in larger cities. Others have not and will be frightened and bewildered about leaving their villages.

Your Coordinator will discuss with you in detail all he knows about the student that will be assigned to your home, and placement will be made on a mutual basis. A portion of the boarding parents application that you will complete is concerned with your concept of what kind of student you would like to join your family. Describe fully—including age, sex, level of adult behavior—because this description will help the Coordinator make a satisfactory placement. If the student is new to the Boarding Home Program, the Coordinator may have little information to relay to the prospective boarding family except for what is supplied on the student's application.

THE ROLE OF THE BOARDING PARENT

Both the boarding parent and the Department of Education assume considerable responsibility when a child is accepted into a boarding home. The State, of course, has to make a thorough investigation of the home involved to ensure proper placement. The boarding parent must assume a role similar to that of a responsible parent.

The following are some examples of what you, as a boarding parent, might be expected to do.

1. Write to the student assigned to your home before he arrives. Describe your home and family, and make him feel welcome.

2. If possible, join the Coordinator to meet the plane on which the student will arrive. If you are unable to do this, make certain you are home so the student knows you are concerned for him. If he is shy, help him meet people and help him to feel at home.

3. Become familiar with the school so that you can help the student register and explain any school policies he doesn't understand. Call on the Coordinator or school personnel for help, if needed.

4. Make sure that the student gets up and gets to school on time.

5. Write to the student's parents at least once each grading period, and encourage the student to write to them often.

6. Watch over the student's personal needs (health, academic, emotional, etc.), and notify the Coordinator if necessary.

7. Visit the school often if possible. Meet the student's teachers and check his progress.

8. Visit often with the Coordinator, keeping him up to date on the student's progress.

9. Make a study of the student's culture and mores in order to better understand him and administer his needs.

10. Provide the student three meals a day. If the student takes a hot lunch at school, the boarding parent should pay for it. Of course, the decision regarding lunches should be a mutual one.

11. Establish some rules for living in your home. The boarding student will look to the boarding parent for guidance, and he will expect certain limitations. Let him know what these are before he makes a mistake. It could save him a great deal of embarrassment. If a student knows clearly what you expect, he will try to live up to it. You will want to set your own standards, but we suggest the following guidelines:

a. That the student take care of his or her own room and personal hygiene, being clean and neat when going to school, to social affairs, and at meal times.

b. That the student take care of personal clothing when possible. If a girl, she should do her own ironing, etc.

c. That you establish a study time for him to work on his school lessons. Be sure he has a quiet place so that he can concentrate on his work.

d. That the student be assigned certain duties around the house—enough so that the student feels a part of the family but not so many that they interfere with homework or school attendance.

e. That the student be encouraged to attend school functions, and participate in school activities.

f. That the student be expected to maintain reasonable hours on school nights and obtain permission before going out in the evening or weekends, and keep the boarding parent informed of where he may be reached. If the student lives close to his home village and wishes to go home on weekends, he should obtain permission from the Coordinator.

g. Regarding visits with relatives: The parents and relatives of the student are very important to him, and contact with them through letters and visits usually helps the placement to be successful. However, sometimes there are problems in connection with parents or relatives visiting a student in the boarding home. It may be necessary to refer the parent or relative to the Coordinator so that an acceptable visiting plan may be worked out.

THE ROLE OF THE COORDINATOR

The boarding home parents should regard the boarding student as their direct responsibility and treat him as a foster child in their home. The boarding parents shortly know the student and recognize his special needs. The boarding home parents should be willing to spend extra time with the student (especially the student new to the Program), helping him with difficulties at home and at school and possibly in finding after-school jobs and appropriate social activities.

There are four Home-School Coordinators in Anchorage, three in Fairbanks, one in Kodiak, one in Bethel and McGrath together, and one for Dillingham and Naknek together.* The Coordinators are available to also assist the student and the boarding home parents. Generally, the Coordinators' responsibilities are:

1. Finding families interested in and capable of boarding students.
2. Making local arrangements for student arrival and departure.
3. Working out problems that students may have with the home, or with the school, at the request of the student, the boarding parents, or the school counselors.
4. Helping students who are having personal problems, such as finances, grades, family problems, etc.
5. Arranging for emergency clothing purchases for students who need it.
6. Working with the school counselors, teachers, and principals, keeping abreast of students' progress.
7. Arranging for tutorial help for students if they need it.
8. Assisting the boarding parents and students in keeping informed of social, educational, and employment opportunities that will be beneficial.
9. Informing the students' natural parents of any irregularities in expected behavior.
10. Filing financial reports with the Division of Regional Schools and Boarding Home Program.
11. Removing students from homes that are not compatible with student needs or State policies.

* Tanana and Fort Yukon are administered through the Fairbanks office. Homer, Glennallen, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Valdez, Tok, Kenai, Soldotna, and Seward are administered out of the Anchorage office.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS OF STUDENTS

Boarding parents should be aware that some students may experience difficulty in school achievement. With this in mind, the boarding parents are urged to work with the student in establishing and developing good study habits. It may be necessary in the beginning to assist him with his homework.

Occasionally, outside assistance may be needed. Tutoring services are available to students and can be arranged through the Coordinator. Each student is permitted a maximum of three hours tutoring service per week.

The natural parents should receive a copy of the student's grades so that they may be aware of the student's academic progress. Boarding parents should discuss with the Coordinator the plan for sending the grades to the natural parents.

PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT FOR STUDENTS

The boarding home parents should encourage the student to find suitable part-time employment if they agree a job would benefit the student.

Most of the students are eligible to participate in the Neighborhood Youth Corps and may work ten to fourteen hours per week for a reasonable hourly rate. Students from low-income families are eligible. NYC is designed to help students stay in school by providing added incentive through part-time employment. (In Anchorage applications may be obtained from the local NYC office, 607 Sixth Avenue, Room 301, Anchorage, 277-7011 or 277-6944.) Applications may also be obtained from the school counselors or from the Coordinator. Unfortunately the Neighborhood Youth Corps has many more applicants than openings in the program, and therefore, students should file their applications with the local NYC office soon after arriving into the boarding home. Students may then be placed on a waiting list.

Students may also apply for a part-time job through the Youth Opportunity division of the State Manpower employment office. (In Anchorage the State employment office is located at 524 West Sixth Avenue, 277-2491.) Since students under twenty-two must supply proof of birth date, the student should request the Coordinator to accompany him on this interview and bring appropriate records.

In addition to NYC and the State Youth Opportunity, there are many other part-time job possibilities for the students. The boarding parents should instruct the students how to take the initial steps in seeking employment, such as how to use classified ads, how to apply for a newspaper route, how to advertise for baby-sitting jobs, etc. Students having special talents might be encouraged to earn money through marketing their own crafts.

Anchorage high schools offer several different "work-study" programs. These programs place students in jobs in the communities for which they are paid and receive class credit. School counselors and the Coordinator can assist interested students obtain information about this

special education program. Boarding parents should request information about such special programs during the first week of the school semester.

MEDICAL AND DENTAL SERVICE

All Native students (1/4 degree Native blood or more) are eligible for care through the Public Health Service (Alaska Native Health Service). Consult your Coordinator to learn the Public Health arrangements for Native students in your specific locality. (In Anchorage this hospital is located at 3rd and Gambell Streets and operates an out-patient clinic from 8:00 a.m.—10:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.—3:00 p.m. weekdays.) You may take your Native student to the Public Health Service yourself, but you should inform the Coordinator and, of course, the natural parent when serious illnesses occur. Emergencies are of course accepted by the hospitals at any time.

Natural parents of students who are able to pay for medical and dental care are asked to do so. Medical bills should be sent directly to the natural parent. If the natural parents of the student are unable to pay for medical or dental treatment, other arrangements may be made through the Coordinator.

TERMINATION OF PLACEMENT

The usual length of placement is the school year. However, there are occasions when a student must leave the boarding home during the school year.

Since the Department of Education is responsible for the student, it is the Coordinator who must remove him from your home or give him permission for leaving. The Coordinator will discuss with you in advance any termination of the student's placement in your home. In some cases it may be necessary for a boarding parent to request the student to leave the home. If possible, some advance notice should be given to the Coordinator in order that other arrangements may be made for the student.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

A monthly stipend of $150.00 is paid to the boarding family for each assigned student. This amount was established from a study of the Division of Health and Welfare's payments for "foster" children. For accounting purposes, this amount is prorated at $5.00 per day, based on a 30-day month. Payment begins on the day the student arrives in the home, but does not include the day he departs. Calculation is based on the number of nights the student actually was in the home. If a student is on an extended absence from the home(i.e., due to hospitalization or Christmas vacation), the Coordinator must evaluate the situation and

recommend whether or not a $5.00 per day deduction should be made during this absence. Usually, for an absence of one to five days, no deduction would be required. However, for a prolonged time it is recommended—except in unusual circumstances. For example, if a student is hospitalized for more than five days and the boarding parent visits daily and takes care of the needs of the student, the deduction should not be made.

The monthly stipend is intended to provide the student three meals a day. If the student takes a hot lunch at school, the boarding parent should pay for it. Of course, the decision regarding lunches should be a mutual one.

CHRISTMAS VACATION

The Boarding Home Program does not pay for transportation of students to their homes for Christmas. It is suggested that the boarding family discuss the question of going home for Christmas early in the school year and all possible financing alternatives be explored. Some students are able to save enough from part-time work or may receive money from home to pay the costs. Others live too far from their homes to make the trip economically feasible.

STANDARDS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM AS A BOARDING HOME FAMILY

1. All members of the boarding home family must be in good physical and mental health.

2. All members should be willing to accept the student and to help him be a part of the family.

3. Boarding parents should be willing to cooperate fully with the Department of Education, its Coordinators and other authorized representatives.

4. The boarding home should be a normal family unit, with a mother and father, except in unusual circumstances.

5. Water supply must be approved by the State Division of Public Health unless it is from an approved municipal source.

6. A student should have his own room, whenever possible. Exceptions are possible and should be discussed with the Coordinator during the initial visitation.

7. The student should be given every opportunity for religious education and church attendance in accordance with the wishes of the natural parents and the student.

APPLICATION

The Home-School Coordinator will talk with you concerning the sharing of your home with a student.

The requirements are as follows:

1. Written application. You will find an application enclosed in this pamphlet.

2. Interview by Home-School Coordinator.

3. T.B. test (or X-Ray if needed) for each member of the family to be taken within six weeks of the student's arrival in your home. Check with your coordinator to learn where T.B. tests are given in your locality. (In Anchorage T.B. Tine tests are given free at the Health Center located at 327 Eagle Street, Anchorage, Alaska — 279-2511.)

4. Water test, if not from an approved municipal water source.

5. Results of the above two tests should be mailed directly to the Coordinator serving your area.

Boarding parents who wish to continue to provide a home next year should make their intentions known to the Home-School Coordinator by the end of each school year. Also, you may know other families who you believe would make good boarding parents. Your referral would be appreciated.

BOARDING HOME PARENT APPLICATION

If, after studying this handbook, you are still interested in participating as boarding parents, please complete the form below and mail or give it to the Home-School Coordinator in your community.

Date of Application _____

Husband _____ Age _____
Last Name First Name

Wife _____ Age _____
Last Name First Name

Residence _____

Mailing address, if different _____

Telephone (Home, or nearest neighbor) _____ Work _____

List Names and Ages of other members of your household:

_____ Age _____

_____ Age _____

_____ Age _____

_____ Age _____

_____ Age _____

_____ Age _____

Have you participated as a boarding home parent in the Program prior to this application?

_____ If so, when? _____

Describe the occupation of the head of the household _____

_____

Will the boarding mother be working? _____

Would you describe the type of individual wanted or anticipated as a boarding student:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Describe your home in terms of the number of rooms, etc._____

_____

_____

Do you own your own home?_____ Would the boarding student have his own room?_____ If not, please explain the sleeping arrangement_____

_____

_____

_____

What kind of heating system does your home have?_____

If your home is in a community which has more than one high school, which one would your boarding student attend?_____

How would your boarding student get to and from school?_____

Would you object to the boarding student attending religious services in a church other than your own?_____

Are you interested in having more than one student?_____ If so, how many?_____

Would you describe interests and hobbies that your family enjoys that would provide the State with additional information that would aid in student placement _____

_____

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